Faculty Recital

Sunday 13 December 2020
Dalton Center Recital Hall
1:00 p.m.

CARL RATNER, Baritone
Carl Witt, Piano

From Petersburg to Broadway

This concert is in commemoration of a similar concert that Dr. Ratner gave with soprano Victoria Evtodieva and pianist Dmitry Chasovitin in Glazunov Hall of the Saint Petersburg Conservatory in Russia on December 13, 2010. The program is co-sponsored by the Kalamazoo Russian Cultural Association.

Serge Rachmaninoff
1873–1943

Весенние воды (Spring Waters) Opus 14, Number 11
Не пой, красавица (Beautiful Maiden, Do Not Sing) Opus 4, Number 4
В молчаньи ночи тайной (In the Silence of the Secret Night) Opus 4, Number 3

Piotr Tchaikovsky
1840–1893

Средь шумного бала (In the Midst of a Noisy Ball) Opus 38, Number 3
Нет только тот, кто знал (None but the Lonely Heart) Opus 6, Number 6

Serge Rachmaninoff

Étude-Tableau for Solo Piano Opus 39, Number 5

Evgeniya “Jane” Kozhevnikova
Isaak Dunaevsky
1900–1955

Незабудки (Мне так печально) (Forget-Me-Not (I am so Sad))
“Как много девушек хороших” (How Many Pretty Girls) from the film Веселые Ребята (Jolly Fellows)

Gian Carlo Menotti
1911–2007

“Bob’s aria” from the opera The Old Maid and the Thief
Jerome Kern  
1885–1945  
“All the Things You Are” from the musical Very Warm for May

George Gershwin  
1898–1937  
Medley: “Love is Here to Stay” and “Love Walked In” from the film Goodwyn Follies

Irving Berlin  
1888–1989  
“I Love a Piano” from the musical Stop! Look! Listen!

Jay Gorney  
1896–1990  
“Give Me Your Tired, Your Poor” from the musical Miss Liberty  
“Brother Can You Spare a Dime?” from the musical revue Americana

Richard Rodgers  
1902–1979  
“Edelweiss” from the film The Sound of Music

Boris Fomin  
1900–1948  
Дорогой Длинною / “Those Were the Days.”

SPECIAL THANKS AND DEDICATION

I wish to express my special thanks to all those who made the 2010 Fulbright and recital experience possible, especially: Igor Fedotov, Victoria Evtodieva, Vladimir Shulyakovskiy, Lidiya Volchek, Rustam Yamilov, Kira Klykova, Lev Elgardt, and the late Dmitry Chasovitin, as well as all of the singers, teachers, and pianists that I had the great fortune to work with while I was there.

This concert is dedicated the memory of Dmitry Nikolaevich Chasovitin (1957–2013), Vice-Rector of the Saint Petersburg Conservatory and Head of the Department of Piano Performance Methodology and Pedagogy. Dmitry graduated from the Saint Petersburg Conservatory in 1982 with a degree in piano. He began teaching there in 1987. Five of his students have been prize-winners in major international competitions. In addition to his teaching and administrative work, he maintained a constant schedule of performances as a solo artist and collaborative pianist. He was named an Honored Artist of Russia in 2003. He recorded six solo CDs including his own arrangements of folk songs from the British Isles with Alexandra Zaryankina and a program of Russian and American songs with Carl Ratner. Dmitry was a fine artist, a caring administrator, and an extraordinary human being. In a remarkable tribute, Olga Saigushkina stated: “His main ability [was] the ability to experience genuine, not ostentatious and not feigned, interest in people. A significant intellectual quality is the manifestation of attention and respect for the identity of another person; in Dmitry Nikolaevich this quality was developed to the level of a rare spiritual sensitivity. He could instantly tune in to the emotional frequency of each of those who turned to him.... With the very first phrase spoken, he knew how to establish contact and win the favor of a complete stranger.”
CARL RATNER currently serves as Co-Chair of Voice and Director of Opera for the School of Music at Western Michigan University. He teaches Applied Voice, French and German Diction, Phonetics for Singers, Vocal Literature, and Opera Workshop, as well as directing the annual opera production. He is internationally known as a baritone soloist, stage director, and opera consultant.

In the Spring of 2018, Ratner participated in the world premiere of Shostakovich’s own arrangement of his Symphony Number 13 for two pianos, bass soloist, and male chorus. In 2017 he traveled to Bulgaria to perform a concert of Verdi and Wagner arias with the Ruse Philharmonic Orchestra. He was awarded a 2010–11 Fulbright grant to perform in recital, give lectures and master classes, direct an American chamber opera and research Russian art song at the St. Petersburg Conservatory in the Russian Federation. In 2011 he toured the eastern United States with a recital of songs by Russian and Russian-American composers, beginning with a performance at the Russian Cultural Center in Washington, D.C. He also collaborated with the Bach Ensemble of Naples Florida for performances of Messiah as well as a mixed program of sacred music that was toured to Germany and the Czech Republic.

His operatic engagements have included the leading baritone roles of Mozart s The Magic Flute, Verdi s Falstaff, Puccini s Gianni Schicchi, Madama Butterfly, and Turandot, as well as Robert Ward s Pulitzer Prize-winning operatic version of The Crucible. He has performed in concert and recital in ten states and six European countries and has sung in 14 languages. He gave the world premiere of Robert Patterson’s song cycle American Pierrot: A Langston Hughes Songbook, and is currently preparing for the world premiere of Bruce Trinkley’s cycle Tennessee Williams Songs, which he has recorded.

Ratner’s career also includes more than two decades of experience as an opera director. He learned his craft assisting directors at major opera houses including Covent Garden (London), the Metropolitan Opera, Munich Opera, San Francisco Opera, Lyric Opera of Chicago, Santa Fe Opera and the Spoleto Festival in Italy, where he worked with eminent composer Gian Carlo Menotti. From 1994 to 1999 served as artistic director of Chicago Opera Theater, Chicago’s second largest opera company, and previously held the same position with Chamber Opera Chicago from 1984 to 1993. He has staged professional productions throughout the United States.

He received his Bachelor of Music degree in music history from the Oberlin Conservatory in Ohio and also participated in an internship in opera, dance and drama production at The Juilliard School in New York City. He earned a Master of Arts in vocal pedagogy at Northeastern Illinois University in Chicago, where he studied with Dr. Ronald Combs and his Doctor of Music degree in vocal performance from the School of Music at Northwestern University, where he studied voice with Bruce Hall and opera with Michael Ehrman.

Educated at the Eastman School of Music, where he earned the top composition prize, CARL WITT has poured his love of music and the arts into chamber music, opera and music theater, contemporary art music, dance, and as a solo artist.

Before devoting himself full time to solo performing, he won the McKnight Performance Award, with Minnesota Orchestra Co-Principal flute Barbara Leibundguth, the McKnight Composer Fellowship, the Quinto Maganini Award, ASCAP awards, and grants and commissions from the Walker Art Center, the Jerome Foundation, the American Composers Forum, the Dayton-Hudson foundation, the Target Foundation, the Twin Cities Metropolitan Arts Council, the Brannon-Cooper Fund, the Fisher Scientific Trust, the Upper Midwest Flute Association, the Faith Partners Residency, and Nautilus Music Theater, Zeitgeist, Opus 21, and individual patrons.

His discography includes releases on the Innova, CRI, Troy-Albany, and Heon labels.

He earned his Bachelor of Music at Western Michigan University, where he studied with Phyllis Rappeport. He received his Masters Degree from Southern Methodist University, and his doctorate in Composition and Applied Piano from the Eastman School of Music. He also studied the pedagogical and performing methods of Abby Whiteside with Sophia Rosoff in New York.